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# MEMORIES OF VAILIMA

# MEMORIES OF VAILIMA

BY

ISOBEL STRONG

AND

LLOYD OSBOURNE

WESTMINSTER
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# VERSES WRITTEN IN 1872

By Robert Louis Stevenson

## I

Though he that ever kind and true,
Kept stoutly step by step with you
Your whole long gusty lifetime through
Be gone awhile before,
Be now a moment gone before,
Yet, doubt not, soon the seasons shall restore
Your friend to you.

## II

He has but turned a corner—still
He pushes on with right goodwill,
Thro' mire and marsh, by heugh and hill
That self-same arduous way,—
That self-same upland hopeful way,
That you and he through many a doubtful day
Attempted still.

## III

He is not dead, this friend—not dead,
But, in the path we mortals tread,
Got some few, trifling steps ahead
And nearer to the end,
So that you, too, once past the bend,
Shall meet again, as face to face, this friend
You fancy dead.

## IV

Push gaily on, strong heart! The while
You travel forward mile by mile,
He loiters with a backward smile
Till you can overtake,
And strains his eyes, to search his wake,
Or whistling, as he sees you through the brake,
Waits on a stile.

# VAILIMA TABLE-TALK

# VAILIMA TABLE-TALK

At Vailima, in the latter part of the year 1892, I began keeping a journal, putting down from time to time bits of Mr. Stevenson's conversation, characteristic sentences and stories. Two large volumes were filled in time, from which I publish the following extracts with some misgiving, for, as will be seen, they are of their nature fragmentary and disconnected. Much that would make them more comprehensible is of too intimate and personal a nature to print, and it would only be possible to render them more consecutive by weaving them into some sort of biography or narrative, which it is neither my province nor my desire to attempt.

'I have been writing to Louis's dictation the story of *Anne de St. Ives*,[1] a young Frenchman in the time of Napoleon. Some days we have worked from eight o'clock until four, and that is not counting the hours Louis writes and makes notes in the early morning by lamp-light. He dictates with great earnestness, and when particularly interested unconsciously acts the part of his characters. When he came to the description of the supper Anne has with Flora and Ronald, he bowed as he dictated the hero's speeches and twirled his moustache. When he described the interview between the old lady and the drover, he spoke in a high voice for the one, and a deep growl for the other, and all in broad Scotch even to "cōma" (comma).

'When Louis was writing *Ballantrae*, my mother says he once came into her

[1] This story was finished, except the last three chapters, and published under the name of *St. Ives*.

room to look in the glass, as he wished to describe a certain haughty, disagreeable expression of his hero's. He told her he actually expected to see the master's clean-shaven face and powdered head, and was quite disconcerted at beholding only his own reflection.

'I was sitting by Louis's bedside with a book, this evening, when he asked me to read aloud. "Don't go back," he said; "start in just where you are." As it happened, I was reading *The Merry Men*; he laughed a little when he recognised his own words. I went on and finished the story. "Well," he said, "it is not cheerful; it is distinctly not cheerful!"

'"In these stories," I asked, "do you preach a moral?"

'"Oh, not mine," he said. "What I want to give, what I try for, is God's moral!"

'"Could you not give 'God's moral' in a pretty story?" I asked.

'"It is a very difficult thing to know," he said; "it is a thing I have often thought over—the problem of what to do with one's talents." He said he thought his own gift lay in the grim and terrible—that some writers touch the heart, he clutched at the throat. I said I thought *Providence and the Guitar* a very pretty story, full of sweetness and the milk of human kindness.

'"But it is not so sweet as *Markheim* is grim. There I feel myself strong."

'"At least," I said, "you have no mannerisms."

'He took the book out of my hand and read "it was a wonderful clear night of stars." "Oh," he said, "how many, many times I have written 'a wonderful clear night of stars!'"

'But I maintained that this, in itself, was a good sentence and presented a picture to the mind. "It is the mannerisms of the author who can't say 'says he' and 'says she' that I object to; whose characters

hiss, and thunder, and ejaculate and syllable——"

'"Oh, my dear," he said, "deal gently with me—I once *fluted*!"'

'*Jan. 16th*, 1893.

'Oh, poor *Anne*! Louis has been laid up with threatenings of a hemorrhage and is not allowed to speak. It is a cruel blow just when we were getting on so well with *Anne*. When I went in to his bedside this morning he wrote on a slate, "Allow me to introduce you to Mr. Dumbley!" He was leaning against a bed-rest to which he called my attention. It was the one Sir Percy Shelley gave him; my mother had taken all the upholstery out as being too warm for this climate, putting in a back of woven cocoa-nut sinnet, which is very neat and pretty, and comfortable besides. He cannot speak nor lean forward to write, for fear of starting a hemorrhage, and yet he does not look ill at all. He is

tanned a good brown, has a high colour and very bright eyes. In illness he is never pale ; as he lies back against the rest in his blue and white Japanese kimono, with a wide red sash, so fresh and bright, looking at you with such a pleasant, smiling face, it is hard to realise he is in great danger.

'He has a slate by his side and writes nonsense on it. "I 'm a rose-garden invalid wreathed in weak smiles." To a visitor who asked "how are you?" he wrote: "Mr. Dumbley is no better and be hanged to him!"

'To pass the time I showed him how to make a, b, and c, on the hands, and we were getting some entertainment out of it when suddenly the brilliant idea struck us both to dictate *Anne* in the deaf and dumb alphabet! It was slow work, and I often made mistakes, but we got on pretty well to the extent of five pages.

'In the afternoon Aolele entertained him

by playing patience on a table drawn to the bed. For his amusement she learned a game from a book, and he is always pleased and interested to see it played, making signs when she goes wrong and pointing at cards for her to take up.

'We are only allowed in to him one at a time, when we all try to be entertaining and recount cheerful adventures of the household. Aolele is very successful at this, but she leaves her smile at the bed-room door; indeed we are all terribly anxious.'

'*Jan.* 18*th.*

'Louis is better to-day, and we did seven pages in the deaf and dumb alphabet. The only concern he has betrayed over his illness was at the first sign of improvement; he wrote, "O Belle, I am so pleased!" and the tears stood in his eyes.'

'*Jan.* 22*nd.*

'To-day Louis was so much better that,

though he had a headache, we wrote twelve pages of *Anne*. When the luncheon bell rang we both thought it a mistake, the morning had flown by so quickly. He generally fills in his convalescence with poetry; to-day he read us some beautiful verses about Aolele and me.'

### MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

High as my heart! the quip be mine
That draws their stature to a line,
My pair of fairies plump and dark,
The dryads of my cattle park.
Here by my window close I sit,
And watch (and my heart laughs at it)
How these my dragon-lilies are
Alike and yet dissimilar.
From European womankind
They are divided and defined
By the free limb and wider mind,
The nobler gait, the little foot,
The indiscreeter petticoat;
And show, by each endearing cause,
More like what Eve in Eden was—
Buxom and free, flowing and fine,

In every limb, in every line,
Inimitably feminine.
Like ripe fruit on the espaliers
Their sun-bepainted hue appears,
And the white lace (when lace they wear)
Shows on their golden breast more fair.
So far the same they seem, and yet
One apes the shrew, one the coquette—
A sybil or a truant child
One runs—with a crop halo—wild;
And one more sedulous to please,
Her long dark hair, deep as her knees,
And thrid with living silver, sees.
What need have I of wealth or fame,
A club, an often-printed name?
It more contents my heart to know
Them going simply to and fro;
To see the dear pair pause and pass
Girded, among the drenching grass,
In the resplendent sun, or hear,
When the huge moon delays to appear,
Their kindred voices sounding near
In the verandah twilight. So
Sound ever; so, forever go
And come upon your small brown feet
Twin honours to my country seat,
And its too happy master lent:
My solace and its ornament.

## THE DAUGHTER, TEUILA, HER NATIVE NAME THE DECORATOR

Man, child or woman, none from her
The insatiable embellisher,
Escapes! She leaves, where'er she goes,
A wreath, a ribbon, or a rose;
A bow or else a button changed,
Two hairs coquettishly deranged,
Some vital trifle, takes the eye,
And shows the adorner has been by.
Is fortune more obdurate grown?
And does she leave my dear alone
With none to adorn, none to caress?
Straight on her proper loveliness
She broods and lingers, cuts and carves,
With combs and brushes, rings and scarves;
The treasure of her hair she takes
Therewith a new presentment makes,
Babe, Goddess, Naïad of the grot,
And weeps if any like it not!
Oft clustered by her bended knees
(Smiling himself) the gazer sees,
Compact as flowers in garden beds,
The smiling faces and shaved heads
Of the brown island babes: with whom
She exults to decorate her room,

To dress them, cheer them when they cry,
And still to pet and prettify.
Or see, as in a looking-glass,
Her graceful, dimpled person pass,
Nought great therein but eyes and hair,
On her true business here and there:
Her huge, half-naked Staff, intent,
See her review and regiment,
An ant with elephants, and how
A smiling mouth, a clouded brow,
Satire and turmoil, quips and tears,
She deals among her grenadiers!
Her pantry and her kitchen squad,
Six-footers all, obey her nod,
Incline to her their martial chests,
With school-boy laughter hail her jests,
And do her in her kilted dress
Obsequious obeisances.
So, dear, may you be never done
Your pretty busy round to run,
And show with changing frocks and scents,
Your ever-varying lineaments:
Your saucy step, your languid grace,
Your sullen and your smiling face,
Sound sense, true valour, baby fears,
And bright, unreasonable tears.
The Hebe of our aging tribe:
Matron and child, my friend and scribe.

'*Feb. 25th*, 1893.

'We are at sea on our way to Sydney. Louis took advantage of our stop at Auckland to call on Sir George Grey[1] to ask his advice on Samoan affairs. He described his visit when he came back to the ship. . . . "He received me in the quietest, coolest manner, heard me with the most extraordinary patience, saying nothing. Again and again I felt ashamed —he still pressed me to go on. He said: 'Let me give you a piece of advice from my own experience—pay no attention to attacks, go on doing what you are doing for the good of Samoa; the time will come when it will be appreciated, and I am one of the few men who have lived long enough to learn this.' Then looking at me with his curious blue eyes and a kind of faint smile, 'The worst of my anxiety is over,' he said. 'I thought you were an

[1] The veteran Ex-Governor and Ex-Premier of New Zealand.

invalid. When I see the fire in your eye, and your life and energy, I feel no more anxiety about Samoa.' I told him it was certainly time I put my hand to the plough, and nothing would make me leave but deportation. He nodded his head at me for quite a considerable time, like a convinced mandarin. 'You may have thought you stopped at Samoa on a whim. You may think me old-fashioned, but I believe it was Providence. There is something over us; and when I heard that a man with the romantic imagination of a novelist had settled down in one of those islands, I said to myself, these races will be saved!' At every turn of the conversation it was the most singular thing to hear the old proconsul allege parallel incidents from all parts of the world, and from any time in the last fifty years. He kept another guest waiting an hour and three-quarters; when we were at last interrupted he bade me wait for him, and walked with me to

the hotel door, arm-in-arm, like a very ancient schoolboy with a younger boy, that was inexpressibly attaching."

'Louis was flattered by the interview and said so; and I was amused to find that not a word had been said about his books. The old man took him altogether as a politician, and I was glad to hear that Louis had complimented the politician on his literary success.

'Aolele's description of Louis. "Sometimes he looks like an old man of eighty with a wild eye, and then, at a moment's notice, he's a pretty brown boy." Now, on this trip, he's the brown boy.'

'*Sydney, March 3rd,* 1893.

'Last evening we went to a dinner given by Mr. and Mrs. —— at the Cosmopolitan Club; as it was a "wonderful clear night of stars," we walked home. We passed the Australia Hotel, just as a tall, soldierly

man, middle-aged, I should think, and undoubtedly a gentleman, came staggering out and swayed up the street fearfully drunk. We stopped and looked after him, Aolele and I keeping the man in sight while Louis made inquiries at the hotel about him. I confess, I should have preferred going on our way, but I could not escape, with Madam Esmond on one hand, and Don Quixote on the other. Louis came out of the hotel very indignant; he had found the attendants grinning; they said, however, they knew the gentleman, and were surprised to see him drinking. Louis ran ahead and overtook the man just as two fellows were lifting him to his feet after a fall. He grasped eagerly at Louis and seemed much relieved in his mind. "You 're a gentleman," he said, "you tell me what to do, and I 'll do it. I 'll do anything you say—you 're a gentleman." The two fellows, who had been helping him, moved off, but one turned back to

say, "You never know a gentleman till he 's tried.' The drunken man went on to offer Louis fifty pounds, saying, "I 'm bad, you 're good," in a most ridiculous way. "Cabby," said he, "do you know me?" "O yes, sir," said Cabby, "you 're Mr. —— of ——." "Will you cash a fifty pound cheque for me?" "Certainly, sir." "All right," said the man, 'I 'll give you five pounds in the morning!" While he was still fumbling for his cheque-book, Louis motioned the cabman to drive off.

'In the meantime a man came up to Aolele, who was standing a little way off, and stared hard at her. "What is the matter with you?" she asked. "I 'm drunk too," said the man.'

'Both Louis and Aolele like to read trash, that is, if it is bad enough to be funny. My mother was tired and sent us out to buy some novels for her. As

we went along the street we saw Louis's picture in many of the shop-windows, and people turned and looked after us in a way, Louis said, that made him feel very self-conscious. We went into a big shop and had picked out an armful of books. A young clerk came up to Louis with great respect and recognition in his eye. "What have you been getting, Mr. Stevenson?" he asked. "We have all the best authors—Meredith, Barrie, Anstey —" and then his countenance changed; he cast a most reproachful, disappointed look at Louis as he read the titles of the chosen works—*The Sin of a Countess, Miriam, the Avenger, The Lady Detective.* He retired and took no further interest in us.

'As we went to get into a cab, we passed a strange-looking old boot-black, who called out "Stevenson!" as we passed. I looked back, but Louis hurried me into the cab, when the man cried out again

"Louis Stevenson!" and then, much louder, "Mr. Louis Stevenson, I've read all your works."'

'Louis is very fond of jewels, as any one may see by his writings, and he indulges this passion as far as circumstances allow.

'He has had three topaz rings made, for topaz is the stone of his birth month, November. Inside two of them are his initials, and these he has presented, with a memorial poem, to my mother and myself. On his own we engraved the first letters of our names. Sapphire is the stone of Lloyd's month, April; so he has bought a set of sapphire studs to take back to Lloyd in Samoa.'

These rings, O my beloved pair,
For me on your brown fingers wear:
Each, a perpetual caress,
To tell you of my tenderness.

Let—when at morning as ye rise
The golden topaz takes your eyes—
To each her emblem whisper sure
Love was awake an hour before.

Ah yes! an hour before ye woke
Low to my heart *my* emblem spoke,
And grave, as to renew an oath,
*It* I have kissed and blessed you both.

SIDNEY, N.S.W., *March* 1893.

'My mother was proposing one day to exchange consciences with Palema, who was quite ready for the bargain. Louis was watching the transaction with interest and suggested that the business might be developed, and that a trade journal might be started where consciences could be advertised for sale or exchange. He himself, he added, might be very glad to avail himself of such facilities, and wondered what his own conscience would look like in print. "Oh!" said Palema, "let me try." "For Sale. A conscience, half-calf, slightly

soiled, gilt-edged (or shall we say uncut?), scarce and curious."

'At this there was a hearty laugh, led by Louis himself.'

'*Vailima, April* 12, 1893.

'I asked Louis why painters, who live in much the same atmosphere as literary men, are less interesting and more narrow-minded; at least that had been my experience. He offered an explanation that sounded reasonable enough. The study of painting or music does not expand the mind in any direction save one. Literature, with its study of human nature, events, and history, is a constant education, and in that career a man cannot stick at one place as the painter and musician almost invariably does. He studies his one pin's point of a talent, enlarging that, perhaps, and deepening it, but in no other direction does his mind work. The

bank clerk, whose daily life is spent in adding up figures, knows that his intelligence is cramped and is more apt to devote his leisure to study and improvement; but the painter believes his work to be a culture, and thinks he needs no more.

'Our talk turned on Millet, to whom Louis takes off his hat. He made money for years doing ordinary popular work, and then, in spite of starvation and a large family, proceeded to paint what he thought was true art.

'"And yet," I said, "if I were one of the large family, I might not think it so fine. A painter might sacrifice his family to his art; would you? Would you go on writing things like *Will o' the Mill* if we were all starving, and *Miriam, the Avenger* would save us?"

'Louis gave in. "You know well enough I would save my family if it carried me to the gallows' foot."'

'*April 19th*, 1893.

'The mail has just come in and stopped all work for the day. It was brought up as usual on horseback by Sosimo, in a big waterproof bag, and carried to Louis's room, followed by the family in great excitement. Louis always empties the mail-bag himself, and parcels out the letters while we all sit in an expectant semicircle on the floor. Woe betide the person who tries to snatch a letter from the pile! We have to wait our turn as Louis throws them out; he gives Austin all the picture papers to open, and as he looks over his own letters he gives me those from strangers and autograph-collectors; I feel neglected if I don't get ten or twelve at least.

'Some of these are very amusing. "Sir, I think you are the greatest author living. Please send me a complete set of Samoan stamps." "Mr. Stevenson, I have to trouble you for your autograph and that

of your talented wife." Others are begging letters asking Louis to pay the travelling expenses of a gentleman who wishes to do missionary work in Samoa combined with raising chickens, or to advance ten pounds in commercial enterprise, for which he will receive as compensation one Angora goat! Many of the letters, though, contain genuine expressions of admiration and thanks for the good his books have given. He always answers sincere letters, especially those from children or sick people. Some of these which he dictated to me are so helpful, so inspiring, that I have dropped tears on the paper as I wrote.

'Every mail brings him a number of books from young authors asking his opinion and advice. These he always reads, and, if possible, encourages the authors with a few words of commendation. If they are hopelessly bad he writes nothing.

'I have a very good system with the autograph hunters. On one set of cards Louis writes his name and the date; on another set a sentiment such as

"Smoking is a pernicious habit";

or an idle rhyme—

"I know not if I wish to please,
I know not if I may,
I only scribble at my ease,
To pass a rainy day."

Or,

"How jolly 'tis to sit and laugh
In gay green-wood,
And write the merry autograph
For other people's good."

'Louis calls these "penny plain and tuppence coloured." The former I send in reply to the ordinary polite request, but those who take the trouble to enclose an addressed envelope and a Samoan stamp I reward with "tuppence coloured." Letters that come spelling his name with

a ph, or "Step Henson," as he calls it, are torn up in wrath.

'Mail-day unsettled Louis for work, so we took a walk in the forest; we wore no hats and went bare-footed under the big spreading trees in the cool shade. We sat on a stone by the upper waterfall and talked about a story we are both reading in *Longman's Magazine*, called *A Gentleman of France*. Louis was so pleased with the opening chapters that he said he was going to write to Mr. Weyman and congratulate him on his work.'

'*April 20th*, 1893.

'I was pottering about my room this morning when Louis came in with the remark that he was a gibbering idiot. I have seen him in this mood before, when he pulls out hairpins, tangles up his mother's knitting, and interferes in whatever his women-kind are engaged upon. So I gave him employment in tidying a

drawer all the morning—talking the wildest nonsense all the time, and he was babbling on when Sosimo came in to tell us lunch was ready; his very reverential, respectful manner brought the Idiot Boy to his feet at once, and we all went off laughing to lunch.

'This afternoon Louis was still too much of an Idiot Boy to write, and he walked about in such a restless way that it occurred to me to teach him to sew. He has done all sorts of things in these moods before, modelling little clay figures, making woodcuts and printing them, and even knitting. He has often told me of the beautiful necktie he knit with his own hands, but he got it so dirty in the course of construction that it was taken away from him and burnt. I cut out some saddle blankets and taught him to herring-bone them in red worsted. He learned the stitch at once and took an absorbing interest in it, the interest he puts into

everything he does. He sat on the sofa by the window in his long blue and white Japanese kimono, his bare feet on the tiger rug, looking such a strange figure at his work. He made loops and then pulled the worsted through as though it was a rope. He suddenly remarked, "I don't seem to get that neat, hurried, bite-your-thread effect that women do so well." He certainly did not. "I think," he added, soberly, "that my style is sort of heaveho and windlassy!" He walked out with Aolele to look at her garden, but hurried back and is now busily at work sewing.

'Louis will never allow any jokes on the subject of "wall-flowers" or old maids. He reduced me to tears describing a young girl dressing herself in ball finery and sitting the evening out with smiles, while her breast was filled with the crushing sense of failure. He says he will never forgive

Thackeray for the old age of Beatrix; nor W. S. Gilbert for the humiliating personage of Lady Jane.

'We were talking island affairs one day, when Lloyd summed up the whole situation thus: "Samoan politics are like the mills of God—they always get to windward of you."

'Louis was telling of a narrow escape from being killed he once had when riding.

'"Why didn't you jump off your horse?" asked my mother.

'"Why, woman! I was ten miles from home."

'"Well," said she, "isn't it better to be ten miles from home than in heaven or hell?"'

'*April 30th*, 1893.

'*Will o' the Mill* made a great impression upon Graham Balfour in his youth, and he declares that his character and life are moulded upon that story. Louis re-

pudiated the tale altogether, and says that Will's sentiments upon life are "cat's meat."

'Conversation at table:

'*Palema.* It is the best thing on life that has been written this age.

'*Louis.* Rather remarkable how little stock I take in it myself.

'*Palema.* If you had stood by your words I would have gone down on my knees to you. But how did you come to write what you don't believe?

'*Louis.* Well, I was at that age when you begin to look about and wonder if you should live your life——

'*Palema.* To be or not to be?

'*Louis.* Exactly. Everything is temperament. Well, I did the other fellow's temperament—held a brief on the other side—to see how it looked.

'*Palema.* Mighty well you did it too.

'*Louis.* No doubt better than I should have done my own side!'

'*May 28th*, 1893.

'Mr. Daplyn, a painter, and an old friend of Louis's, is visiting us; we hold fierce and animated debates on all sorts of subjects. On Imagination in Art *versus* Technical Skill—Moral Codes, and the Conduct of Life; and this morning we debated whether it was unmanly for the sterner sex to weep. Palema scorned a man who wept, but was forced to admit that noble actions were touching—that the Indian Mutiny must not be spoken of, and barred out suffering children. Lloyd proclaimed loudly that he himself was an emotional man. "And," he added, "perhaps the lightest-hearted member of this family!" which was hailed with shouts of laughter. Louis said that he had wept in public and wept in private, had cried over stories and people, and would continue to do so to the end of the chapter.

'Mr. Daplyn, the most scornful anti-weeper of the party, wound up with the

remark, "but I'm easily moved to tears myself!"

'This afternoon we all congregated in Lloyd's study; there are not many chairs, so some of us lay at full length on the bear-skins. Louis paced up and down the room, and Palema drew up his six-feet-two against the wall. The talk was introspective. Everybody described himself and the workings of his own inner consciousness. Louis said: "I can behave pretty well on the average, though I come to grief on occasions. I love fighting, but bitterly dislike people to be angry with me—the uncomfortable effect of fighting." He said he was forgiving, but Aolele denied it and said, "Louis thinks he forgives, but he only lays the bundle on the shelf and long after takes it down and quarrels with it." "No!" protested Louis, "it is on the shelf, I admit, and I would let it stay there. But if any one else pulled it down I would tear

it with fury. In fact," he went on, "I am made up of contradictory elements, and have a clearing-house inside of me where I dishonour cheques of bitterness."

'Palema said of himself that he was a stoical epicurean.

'"I," cried Louis, "am a cynical epicurean."

'"I," continued Palema, "am made up inside of water-tight compartments that nowhere join!"

'I said there was a good deal of theatre in my inside, which led to a lively discussion on posing before the world. That to carry a brave front though your heart quaked was a pose; to live up to your better nature was a pose; and Louis made us all laugh by saying earnestly, "In short, everybody who tries to do right is a hypocrite!"'

'*May 31st*, 1893.

'I asked Louis, in the course of a

conversation this evening, how he defined the word literature.

'"It is capable of explanation, I think," he said; "when you see words used to the best purpose—no waste, going tight around a subject. Also they must be true. My stories are not the truth, but I try to make my characters act as they would act in life. No detail is too small to study for truth. Lloyd and I spent five days weighing money and making calculations for the treasure found in *The Wrecker*.

'I asked him why Charles Reade was not a stylist, though his writings answered to the description.

'"You are right," Louis said; "he is a good writer, and I take off my hat to him with respect. And yet it was in continuity that he failed. In the *Ebb Tide*, that is now under way, we started on a high key, and oh, haven't we regretted it! If I wanted to say 'he kicked his leg and he winked his eye,' it would be perfectly flat

if I wrote it so. I must pile the colours on to bring it up to the key. Yet I am wrong to liken literature to painting. It is more like music—which is time; painting is space. In music you wind in and out, but always keep in the key; that is, you carry the hearer to the end without letting him drop by the way. It winds around and keeps on. So must words wind around. Organised and packed in a mass, as it were, tight with words. Not too short — phrases rather — no word to spare.

'"There are two kinds of style, the plastic, such as I have just described; the other, the simple placing of words together for harmony. The words should come off the tongue like honey. I began so as a young man; I had a pretty talent that way, I must confess."

'I asked him if he thought his present full, entertaining novels, crowded with people and adventure, an improvement

upon his earlier honey-dropping essays. But he refused that. He could not, he said, criticise his own work or see it well enough. But in others, he had noticed that the writers who began with honey-sweetness often developed in later work a certain brusqueness and ruggedness.

"'Did they do it well?' I asked.

"'You bet they did!' said Louis. "Both Beethoven and Shakespeare are good examples of it, in their different arts. Shakespeare's earliest works were plain, dull, unimpassioned verse. Next came his first singing note—such as *Romeo and Juliet*; ah," he quoted

'My love is boundless as the sea.'

"The words are like music. Then a strange thing happened—surely some evil woman must have crossed his path and driven him to the hideous work of *Troilus and Cressida*; and yet, but for its indecency and brutality it might have been

his greatest work. He took the plot from Chaucer, who had told it quietly and prettily, and made of it the horror it is. Then came his later works, full of strength, and broken with flashes so delicate he might have touched them with his tongue and passed on."

'I asked him if it were good for the young writer to wade in emotions.

'"Good God, no!" he said; "first make his words go sweet, and if he can't spend an afternoon turning a single phrase he'd better give up the profession of literature."

'Louis is often charged with being secretive. He turned one day to his mother, who had been questioning him about some trifling matter, and took hold of her shawl.

'"Who gave it to you?"

'"I bought it."

'"*Where* did you buy it?"

'"At Gray and Macfarlane's," answered his mother.

'"Why?" persisted Louis.

'"I don't know," said Tamaitai Matua, laughing.

'"Good Heavens, woman, why so secretive? Why can't you answer a simple question? Why put me off with a Gray and Macfarlane?" It was all nonsense, but the phrase survived, and when Louis is asked where he is going he answers, "To call on Gray and Macfarlane!" and when his mother begged to know from whom an important-looking letter had come, he said, in broad Scotch, "From Gray, mem, with Macfarlane's compliments!"'

'*June 8th*, 1893.

'I have just come back from a week's visit at a native village down the coast. Louis says I look as brown as a ham. Aolele said, "I hope you are not tired; you look pale—a pale black, I mean."

'When I came up to my room, after being so long away, I found it all decorated with flowers and streamers of cocoanut fibre, the work of my Samoan boy, Mitaele; he had fastened a garland of hibiscus flowers on my beautiful ash wardrobe by means of tacks, but he meant well, and I hadn't the heart to reprove him. On my writing-table a number of *Longman's* was lying open, with the following verses in Louis's hand fastened to the page with a hairpin:

> "Whether you come back glad or gay,
> Or come with streaming eyes and hair,
> Here is the gate of the golden way,
> Here is the cure for all your care!
> And be your sorrows great or small,
> Here, breathe this quantum of romance.
> Be sure you will forget them all
> With this dear *Gentleman of France*!"'

'*June 30th*, 1893.

'We had a fright about my mother today. We were visiting the rebel outposts,

and in going through a government village Louis called out to us to ride fast. These people all know that we sympathise with the rebels, and it is perhaps a little foolhardy to go through their villages to visit our friends on the other side. Every house we passed was crowded with men bearing rifles. I rode ahead with Louis, and when we looked back for Aolele, we were horrified to see her in the middle of the village, surrounded by armed men. Louis rode back in alarm and found that her horse had balked, and the amiable warriors had come to her assistance.

'These Samoan fighting men look very terrible in their battle array with blackened faces and a long "head-knife" in their hands. But on close inspection their eyes are always kind and their smile sweet.'

'*Aug. 23rd*, 1893.

'We had a trying but characteristic morning over *Anne*. We were sailing

along on the eleventh chapter when a smart Samoan man appeared with a letter. It was from ——, full of politics and fury, and Louis sent for my mother to come and hear it read aloud. We dismissed —— with scorn equal to his own and on to work.

'"Chapter twelve," dictated Louis, "Buccleton——"

'"That 's cheap," I said.

'"What 's the matter with it? Isn't it good enough for you? What do you want?"

'"Well," I said, "I want 'The Dying Uncle' or 'The Nephew's Fortune.'"

'Louis jeered, but compromised on "My Uncle," and we were off again. Suddenly Aolele burst in. A man had cut his leg with a cane-knife, and I must get perchloride of iron and bandages.

'I did that all right, started Sosimo at work on Palema's room with a warning not to wash his tan shoes in the river;

saw that the calf was watered; set the girls to making wreaths for the dinner-party to-night, and returned breathless to *Anne*, when we worked on serenely until interrupted by the first bell for lunch.'

'*Nov. 3rd*, 1893.

'Louis has been writing autographs for me; this is to put in the fly-leaf of *Memories and Portraits*:

> Much of my soul is here interred,
> My very past and mind:
> Who listens nearly to the printed word
> May hear the heart behind.

'Louis, Palema and I were walking in the forest to-day and were very thirsty. We looked up at some cocoanut trees, and Louis said:

'"If we were natives it would be an easy matter to climb that tree. It is filled with young nuts full of milk.'

'"I wish I had some to drink," I said longingly.

'"Wouldn't it be aggravating," said Louis, "to die of thirst under a cocoanut tree because you hadn't the knack of climbing!"

'"I wouldn't die of thirst," said Palema.

'"What would you do?" asked Louis.

'"I 'd die of rage," he said.'

'*Nov. 20th,* 1893.

'All our Samoan "boys" went to the great missionary meeting, wearing the Vailima uniform of white shirts, red and white blazers, and the Stuart tartan lava-lava. (*Note.*—A garment worn in the manner of a kilt.) According to their own accounts they were much admired. Murmurs on all sides were heard about the fine appearance and good looks of "Tama o le Ona," or, as Louis puts it, "the M'Richies."'

'*Dec. 10th,* 1893.

'Louis's birthday is the thirteenth of

Nov., but he was not well, so we postponed festivities to the twenty-first. It was purely native, as usual. We had sixteen pigs roasted whole underground, three enormous fish (small whales, Lloyd called them), 400 pounds of salt beef, ditto of pork, 200 heads of taro, great bunches of bananas, native delicacies done up in bundles of *ti* leaves, 800 pineapples, many weighing fifteen pounds, all from Lloyd's patch, oranges, tinned salmon, sugar-cane, and ship's biscuit in proportion. Among the presents to Tusitala, besides flowers and wreaths, were fans, native baskets, rolls of *tapa*, *ava* bowls, cocoanut cups beautifully polished, and a talking-man's staff; and one pretty girl from Tanugamanono appeared in a fine mat (the diamonds and plate of Samoa), which she wore over her simple tapa kilt, and laid at Tusitala's feet when she departed. Seumanu, the high chief of Apia, presented Louis with the title of "Au-mai-taua-i-manu-vao."'

'*Dec. 27th.*

'Christmas Eve we devoted to our Samoans; we had forty, counting the children, and not one of them, old or young, had ever seen a Christmas-tree before. Lloyd distributed the gifts (they had all come out from the Army and Navy Stores in London), and made appropriate speeches in Samoan.'

'*Feb. 6th*, 1894.

'Louis and I spent a long and busy day over *Hermiston*;[1] we've been working at it, already, several days. Captain Wurmbrandt, an Austrian cavalry officer, and Mr. Buckland, known on his own island as Tin Jack (the original of Tommy Haddon in *The Wrecker*), are staying with us. The Captain's stories are of the camp, and Tin Jack's are of love and the Islands. The two are excellent company for the rainy season.'

[1] *Weir of Hermiston*, the last story on which Mr. Stevenson worked, and his best.

'*Feb.* 12*th*, 1894.

'I have been reading a paper by Miss Dickens about her father, and found a particular instance in which Louis resembles him. They both love dancing, but could neither of them waltz. Both were excellent in the polka, and Louis is quite capable of getting out of bed at night, like Dickens, to practise a new step. But my hero has gone a step beyond the illustrious novelist. He began theorising—as he does about everything under the sun—on the subject of dance time. He could never keep step to threes, he said; it was unnatural. The origin of all counting is the beating of the heart, and how could you make one—two —three out of that?

'"How about triple time in music?" I said; "you play it all right on your flageolet!"

'"I understand that," he said, "it counts three between every heart-beat."

'"Then waltz to triple time," I said, and he did at once beautifully.

'The mention of Dickens reminds me of a story that Louis is very fond of telling, of an old Frenchman in Samoa, who, the first time he saw Louis, struck an attitude, and exclaimed, "*Ah! quelle ressemblance!*" Then approaching him, "How like! How like—Monsieur Charles Dickens. Did no one ever tell you that before?" And Louis was compelled to confess that certainly nobody ever had.'

'*Feb.* 13*th*, 1894.

'We danced this evening after dinner in the big hall. Mamma sat on the table and turned the hurdy-gurdy, and Louis waltzed to triple time. He can also dance the Highland schottische, which he does with much earnestness. We had great fun teaching it to Captain Wurmbrandt, who, being an Austrian, is of course a beautiful dancer. Tin Jack (Tin means Mr. in his

island) looked handsome and thoughtful as he skimmed about the room in the most beautiful imitation of a waltz, but without a step to bless himself with. I did not realise how good Tommy Haddon was till I read it over again in *The Wrecker*, after meeting Tin Jack. He is quite as handsome as Louis describes him, and has a trusting, earnest look. He asked, "What kind of dances do they have here, round and square?" I answered, in some irritation, "No, three-cornered." "Gracious!" he exclaimed, with interest, "what kind of a dance is that?"

'He is paying his addresses to a young lady here, and Louis wrote the following valentine, which I illuminated in gold on white satin:

'The isle-man to the lady—I,
Whose rugged custom it has been
To sleep beneath a tropic sky
And bivouac in a savage scene.

Ah ! since at last I saw you near,
How shall I then return again ?
Alone in the void hemisphere
How shall my heart endure the pain ? '

' *March* 10*th*, 1894.

' To-day is my mother's birthday, and she says the best of her presents is the piece of paper she found pinned on her mosquito-netting in the morning. It was signed R. L. S., and addressed " To the Stormy Petrel."

' Ever perilous
And precious, like an ember from the fire
Or gem from a volcano, we to-day,
When drums of war reverberate in the land
And every face is for the battle blacked—
No less the sky, that over sodden woods
Menaces now in the disconsolate calm
The hurly-burly of the hurricane—
Do now most fitly celebrate your day.

Yet amid turmoil, keep for me, my dear,
The kind domestic faggot. Let the hearth
Shine ever as (I praise my honest gods)
In peace and tempest it has ever shone.'

'*March* 17*th*.

'Yesterday and to-day we wrote steadily at *Anne*, while war news and rumours flew thick and fast around us. The Captain brought us word that the ——s were barricading their house with mattresses, and many natives are taking their valuable mats to the Mission for safety. We are on the very outposts, and if the Atuans did attack Apia they would have to pass Vailima. Our woods are full of scouting parties, and we are occasionally interrupted by the beating of drums as a war-party crosses our lawn. But nothing stops the cheerful flow of *Anne*. I put in the remark, between sentences, "Louis, have we a pistol or gun in the house that will shoot?" to which he cheerfully answers, "No, but we have friends on both sides," and on we go with the dictation.'

'*June 4th,* 1894.

'This evening, as Austin and I were swinging in the hammock, we heard a call from Aolele: "Big guns!" We ran out on the verandah; over toward Atua, where the rebels are, we heard the booming of cannon from the men-of-war, and we watched the exchange of signals with the ships in port by means of rockets and search-lights. There has been fighting in Aána and a number of wounded men were brought into the Mission. Dr. Hoskyn, of the *Curaçoa*, is doing noble work among them; the natives simply worship him.'

'*June 30th.*

'Louis has just returned from a trip on board H.M.S. *Curaçoa* to the neighbouring island of Manu'a. It is really a part of the Samoan group, but when the Berlin treaty was made between the three great Powers they forgot Manu'a, and now the

little island is independent and at peace, reigned over by a young half-caste girl of eighteen. When commissioners and tax-collectors went over to Manu'a, the young queen gave them to understand that the island was her own, and they had no business there, though otherwise they were treated with Samoan hospitality. It is a very interesting place, and Louis had a great deal to tell us about his trip, but I think he enjoyed the man-of-war itself the most. He says he has gained enough experience to write a sea-story; he has stored up technical terms from the officers, and ship slang from the midshipmen. He was invited to afternoon tea with the warrant officers, had early morning cocoa with Mr. Burney, one of the midshipmen, and was reproved by the captain for crossing the batten on the poop which marks off the post of the officer on duty. In his daily tub he was so careful not to splash the water that the

severe orderly, a marine, didn't believe he had taken a bath at all, looking so suspiciously at Louis that he declares he felt like apologising.

'"Lay out a clean shirt, Abbott," he said one evening as he was dressing for dinner.

'"This is Saturday, Mr. Stevenson," said the orderly. "The one you have will do well enough. I will lay out a clean one to-morrow!"

'Sosimo never smiled all the time Louis was away; he was the first to sight the man-of-war steaming into the harbour, and was on the beach holding Jack by the bridle before the *Curaçoa* had come to anchor. Louis rode home, leaving Sosimo to go on board and bring up his valise.

'Long ago Louis had a topaz stud that was somewhat difficult to put into his shirt, so he gave it to me. I laid it away in my trinket box and was dismayed, when I first wanted to wear it, to find it gone.

Sosimo had missed the stud, discovered it in my box, and carried it back to Louis's room. I kept up the fight for some time, trying to secrete it from Sosimo by putting it in out-of-the-way places, but it was invariably found in Louis's room, no matter where I had hidden it.

'When he came up from the ship he put Louis's valise down on the verandah and carefully abstracted from his mouth the precious stud he had carried there for safety. I gave up, then, and it is now Louis's own.

'We miss Louis so terribly, even for a few days, that now we all rejoice to be together again. There are just seven of us: Aunt Maggie and her son Louis, Aolele and her son Lloyd, myself and my son Austin, and Palema, as the natives call Louis's cousin, Graham Balfour.

'Our furniture has come all the way from Scotland: thirty-seven cases, some of them fifteen feet square, weighing in

all seventy-two tons. The boxes were brought up on the bullock-carts of the German firm by scores of Solomon Island blackboys, in a most exciting and noisy procession.

'Mr. Moore, chaplain of H.M.S. *Curaçoa*, came up in his spotless white clothes to help us unpack, returning to his ship in the evening the picture of a chimney-sweep—or, as Louis said, "black, but comely."'

'*July 9th.*

'We have been very gay. Lloyd, Louis, and I went to the officers' ball on the 3rd, and on the 4th, two *Curaçoa* marines appeared on the verandah. "Me and my messmates," one of them said, "invites Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson, Mrs. Strong, Mr. Osbourne, and Mr. Balfour to a sailors' ball in the same 'all as last night, not forgetting young Goskin." We accepted with pleasure, and I went, escorted by Louis and Austin. The ball was a great

success; everybody was there. Louis said, as he looked on at officers and sailors dancing in the same set, harmony and good-fellowship on all sides, "The *Curaçoa* revives my faith in human nature!"

'The next day, Louis, Lloyd, and I rode in the German flower parade or Blumen-Corso, as they called it; last night we had a dinner-party of twenty, the first time since the boxes were opened, and displayed all our silver and glass with dazzling effect. The big hall lights up beautifully at night, and the pictures, and busts, and old furniture, change the whole aspect of the room. Our guests included Count and Countess Rudolf Festetics, of the yacht *Tolna*, now in port, the captain of the English man-of-war (the German captains were asked but were away cruising) and President Schmidt. Louis was in splendid health and spirits, and though work has been neglected, nobody cares.

'An English midshipman who is spend-

ing a week with us, told me that though he had known and liked Mr. Stevenson all this time, it was only the other day, when he was roaming about the library, looking at the books, that it came over him all of a heap—"*he's* the josser that wrote *Treasure Island*."'

'*July 22nd*, 1894.

'On Sunday evening, as Austin went to bed, I sat with him as usual for a little talk. He told me a good deal about the Mission at Monterey where he had been at school and the services of the Catholic church. "Protestants," he said, "don't seem to care for you when you're dead, but the Catholics——" and he gave a long description of the funeral ceremonies, ending up with "and eight pall-berries by your coffin!"

'I told them all when I came down. '"What a pretty funeral," said Louis, "to be decorated with pall-berries!"

'"That is," said Palema, "if it is in the pall-berry season."

'"In the islands," said Lloyd, "I suppose they would have tinned pall-berries!"

'"Imagine," said Palema, "if you were too early in the season and the pall-berries were green. Unripe pall-berries!"

'"Or too late," said Louis; "fancy if the pall-berries were rotten!"

'We were talking about some champagne we had drunk at a friend's house.

'*Palema.* And such stuff! Such sticky, sweet, treacly——

'*Louis.* After all, there are only three kinds of champagne—sweet, dry, and gooseberry.

'*Teuila.* The kind we had was gooseberry.

'*Palema.* It was worse; it was old gooseberry.

'*Louis.* We used to get some vile stuff at ——'s in London.

'*Palema.* Restaurant champagne?

'*Louis.* Infinitely worse! God knows who could have made it—the manufacture must have been a secret.

'*Palema.* A secret that died with the man who drank it!

'I came into Louis's room to find him and Sosimo very busy, clearing up and sorting papers. "Did you tell Sosimo to do this?" I asked. "No," said Louis, with his arms full of books, "*he* told *me*!"

'The other day the cook was away, and Louis, who was busy writing, took his meals in his room. Knowing there was no one to cook his lunch, he told Sosimo to bring him some bread and cheese. To his surprise he was served with an excellent meal—an omelette, a good salad, and perfect coffee.

'"Who cooked this?" asked Louis, in Samoan.

'"I did," said Sosimo.

'"Well," said Louis, "great is your wisdom."

'Sosimo bowed and corrected him—"Great is my love!"'

'*Aug. 5th*, 1894.

'Now that the *Curaçoa* is here, Louis only works in the forenoon. Later in the day some one is sure to be seen toiling up the road by what they call "the *Curaçoa* track," and shortly before they reach the turnstile exchange pleasantries with the upper verandah, where Louis is reading, playing piquet with Palema, or giving Austin a French lesson. If the visitor happens to be either of the two Scotch midshipmen, Lord Kelburn or Mr. Meiklejohn, then the greetings on both sides are in a most excruciating Edinburgh or Glasgow accent. The other day we had a most interesting conversation with the first lieutenant, Mr. Eeles, who is Louis's par-

ticular chum on board, and the Lieutenant of Marines, Mr. Worthington.

'Our talk turned upon the Islands: Lieutenant Eeles told us of a visit he made to some far-off islands of the South-western Pacific; the natives showed him a place where the "turtle men" were buried. They called them that, they said, because, though they were white men, their breasts and backs were hard like turtles. He was not much interested, having heard any number of island yarns and legends. It was only after he left the place, and the ship was on its way to Fiji, that suddenly waking from sleep, he sat up with the thought, like a revelation, "the turtle men were white soldiers in armour!"

'Lloyd told of an island a friend of ours had visited that had been bombarded by a man-of-war; one bomb, left behind in the sand, had not exploded. Afterwards some natives found it, and began hammering it, when it exploded, killing a number of

them. Since then the natives warn strangers to be careful of the stones, as they are dangerous and liable to blow up.

'Louis is never tired of hearing the Soldier (as we call Mr. Worthington), who has introduced us to Chevalier's songs. So we wound up the evening with "Liza" and the Vicar's song from *The Sorcerer*, Louis joining in the chorus at the top of his voice.'

'*Aug. 27th.*

'We have worked at *Anne* all these mornings when the guns were firing on Atua, stopping once in a while to speculate on what damage they might be doing. We can get no news, but will hear all about it when the *Curaçoa* comes back. They hate to bombard a miserable little native stronghold and kill a handful of innocent people, but they have to obey orders; in the meantime, we plod along at *Anne*, while groups of natives stand silently

and anxiously on the verandah, looking toward Lotuanuu listening to the booming of the guns.

'To-day we were in the middle of the chapter about the claret-coloured chaise, when we were interrupted by the arrival of eight chiefs. They proved to be the liberated political prisoners that we had been interested in for so long, whose freedom from jail they owe to Louis. Louis entertained them in the smoking-room; we all sat on the floor in a semicircle, and had *ava* made. Their speeches were very beautiful, and full of genuine gratitude as they went back over the history of every kindness that Louis had done for them. In proof of their gratitude they offered to make a road, sixty feet wide, connecting us with the highway across the island. The offer touched and surprised Louis very much, and though he tried to refuse, they overruled every objection. He said if they made the road he would like to

name it "The Road of the Grateful Hearts," but they said no, it would be called "The Road of the Loving Heart," in the singular, and they asked me to copy out a paper they had written with that name, and all their titles attached, to be painted on a board and put up at the cross-roads.'

'*Sept. 24th,* 1894.

'Louis and I have been writing, working away every morning like steam-engines on *Hermiston.* Louis got a set-back with *Anne,* and he has put it aside for a while. He worried terribly over it, but could not make it run smoothly. He read it aloud one evening and Lloyd criticised the love-scene, so Louis threw the whole thing over for a time. Fortunately he picked up *Hermiston* all right, and is in better spirits at once. He has always been wonderfully clear and sustained in his

dictation, but he generally made notes in the early morning, which he elaborated as he read them aloud. In *Hermiston* he had hardly more than a line or two of notes to keep him on the track, but he never falters for a word, giving me the sentences, with capital letters and all the stops, as clearly and steadily as though he were reading from an unseen book. He walks up and down the room as I write, and his voice is so beautiful and the story so interesting that I forget to rest; when we are interrupted by the lunch-bell, I am sometimes quite cramped, and Louis thumps me on the back in imitation of a Samoan *lomi-lomi* (massage) and apologises. The story is all the more thrilling as he says he has taken me for young Kirsty.

'We had such an interesting time to-day, looking over old fashion-books for the heroine's clothes. Her dress is gray, to which I suggested the addition of a pink kerchief; this afternoon Louis came

into my room to announce that in her evening walk Kirsty would wear pink silk stockings to match her kerchief; he said he could use the incident very artfully to develop her character. "Belle," he said, "I see it all so clearly! The story unfolds itself before me to the least detail—there is nothing left in doubt. I never felt so before in anything I ever wrote. It will be my best work; I feel myself so sure in every word!"'

'*Nov. 30th.*

'A few days ago three sailors of H.M.S. *Wallaroo* came up and asked for a drink of water. We gave them seats on the verandah and offered them some cool beer after their long, hot walk. When Louis came down to talk to them he was not long in discovering that they were all three Scotch; they had made for Vailima, "like homing pigeons," on their first day

of leave. When they were going away I gave them an opportunity to return by asking for a pattern of a sailor jacket.

'Yesterday we were sitting on the little front verandah by Louis's work-room, pegging away at *Hermiston* like one o'clock. I hardly drew breath, but flew over the paper; Louis thinks it is good himself, so we were in a very cheerful humour; we heard a babble of voices at the gate and recognised our sailors. Louis gave up with the utmost good-nature, and came down to talk with them. It was Thanksgiving Day, and preparations were going on for a dinner party, with all American dishes. Aolele was experimenting with some Samoan berries, with a view to cranberry sauce; the kitchen department was in great excitement over that foreign bird, the turkey. I overhauled the silver, Lloyd was concocting cocktails to stow away on the ice, and the village

girls, who scent festivities from afar, and always appear smiling and ready to help, were filling the jars and vases, and dressing the table in flowers; all this made a great confusion, but Louis kept his sailors on all the afternoon.

'He took them over the house and showed them the busts and statues, the Burmah gods, the curiosities from the islands, the big picture of Skerryvore light-house, built by his grandfather on the coast of Scotland; the treasured bit of Gordon's handwriting, from Khartoum, in Arabic letters on a cigarette paper, framed, for safety, between two pieces of glass; and the library, where the Scotchmen gathered about an old edition of Burns, with a portrait. Louis gave a volume of *Underwoods*, with an inscription, to Grant, the one who hailed from Edinburgh, and the man carried it carefully wrapped in his handkerchief. As they went away, waving their sailor hats and keeping step, Louis

leaned over the railing of the verandah and said, looking after them with a smile, "How I love a blue-jacket! What a pity we can't invite them to our dinner to-night; they would be so entertaining!"'

# MR. STEVENSON'S HOME LIFE AT VAILIMA

## MR. STEVENSON'S HOME LIFE AT VAILIMA

THREE miles behind Apia, on a rising plateau that stands some seven hundred feet above the ocean level, lie the house and grounds of Vailima. 'I have chosen the land to be my land, the people to be my people, to live and die with,' said Mr. Stevenson, in his speech to the Samoan chiefs; and his great lonely house beneath Vaea Mountain, the fruit of so much love, thought, and patient labour, will never lose the world's interest, nor fail to be a spot of pious pilgrimage, so long as his books endure and his exile be unforgotten. For Stevenson was an exile; he knew he would never see his native land again

when the *Ludgate Hill* carried him down the Thames; he knew he had turned his back for ever on the old world, which had come to mean no more to him than shattered health, shattered hopes, a life of gray invalidism, tragic to recall. Whatever the future held in store for him, he knew it could be no worse than what he was leaving, that living death of the sick-room, the horror of which he never dared put to paper. I can remember the few minutes allowed him each day in the open air when the thin sunshine of South England permitted; his despairing face, the bitterness of the soul too big for words when this little liberty was perforce refused him. I recall him saying: 'I do not ask for health, but I will go anywhere, live anywhere I can enjoy the ordinary existence of a human being.' I used to remind him of that when at times his Samoan exile lay heavy upon him, and his eyes turned longingly to

home and to those friends he would never see again.

I will say nothing of the voyaging, of the long, dim winter in the Adirondacks, of the various chain of events that carried him into the southern seas and a new life. His health began to return at once; at the end of the second cruise in the schooner *Equator*, he even dared to think of returning home, and went to the length of engaging cabins in the mail steamer. But even the mild and pleasant climate of New South Wales, so like that of Italy or southern California, proved too harsh for his new-born strength, and a severe illness overwhelmed him on the eve of his departure. The vessel sailed without him, and he was no sooner able to walk than he returned to the islands in the private trading steamer of one of his friends. He grew well immediately, and began to recognise the hopelessness of quitting the only spot that offered him a degree of

health; and when the cruise was done and the vessel paid off in Sydney, he returned to Samoa in order to make it his home.

When we first saw Vailima it was covered with unbroken forest; not the forest of the temperate zone with varied glades and open spaces, but the thick tangle of the tropics, dense, dark, and cool in even the hottest day. The murmur of streams and waterfalls fell sometimes upon our ears as we wandered in the deep shade, and mingled with the cooing of wild doves and the mysterious, echoing sound of a native woodpecker at work. Our Chinaman, who was with us on this first survey, busied himself with taking samples of the soil, and grew almost incoherent with the richness of what he called the 'dirty.' We, for our part, were no less delighted with what we saw, and could realise, as we forced our way through the thickets and skirted the deep ravines, what a noble labour lay before our axes, what exquisite

views and glorious gardens could be carved out of the broken mountain-side and the sullen forest.

The land was bought, a half square mile of forest-clad plateau, ravine, and mountain, and the blind blacksmith who sold the property generously threw in a herd of cattle, very precisely estimated at forty in number, which from that day to this has never been seen by the eye of man. Years passed in health-resorts and crowded cities made Mr. Stevenson greedy of land-owning when the opportunity came to him; he was determined that no row of villas in the uncertain future should mar his vistas of the sea nor press their back gardens into his plantation. In this, it must be confessed, he saw far ahead, for poor, distracted, war-worn Samoa has not encouraged the villa-resident as yet, and the primeval forest still stretches from Vailima across the island to the shores beyond.

A rough shanty was built, a pony

bought, a German in decayed circumstances engaged as cook, and Mr. Stevenson took up his quarters in the first clearing and began pioneer life with an undaunted heart. For months he lived in a most distracting fashion, and threw himself with ardour into the work of felling, clearing, and opening up his acres to cultivation. Gangs of Samoans were busy the whole day long, and the rough, overgrown path from town flattened beneath the tread of naked feet. Planks and scantling lined it for upwards of a mile, representing the various stages of his industry and the various misfortunes that had overtaken the noble savage in his labours. The little leisure of the planter was spent in studying the language, in teaching his overseer English decimals and history after the harassing hours of the day, and in acquainting himself first hand with the amazing inconsistencies that make up the Samoan character.

The new house was built; I arrived from England with the furniture, the library, and other effects of our old home; the phase of hard work and short commons passed gradually away, and a form of hollow comfort dawned upon us. I say hollow comfort, for though we began to accumulate cows, horses, and the general apparatus of civilised life, the question of service became a vexing one. An expensive German cooked our meals and quarrelled with the white housemaid; the white overseer said that 'manual labour was the one thing that never agreed with him,' and that it was an unwholesome thing for a man to be roused in the early morning, 'for one ought to wake up natural-like.' The white carter 'couldn't bear with niggers,' and though he did his work well and faithfully, he helped to demoralise the place and add to our difficulties. Everything was at sixes and sevens, when, on the occasion of

Mrs. Stevenson's going to Fiji for a few months' rest, my sister and I took charge of affairs. The expensive German was bidden to depart; Mr. Stevenson discharged the carter; the white overseer (who was tied to us by contract) was bought off with cold coin, to sleep out his 'natural sleep' under a kindlier star and to engage himself (presumably) in intellectual labours elsewhere. With the departure of our tyrants we began again to raise our diminished heads: my sister and I threw ourselves into the kitchen, and took up the labour of cooking with zeal and determination; the domestic boundaries proved too narrow for our new-found energies, and we overflowed into the province of entertainment, with decorated menus, silver-plate and finger-bowls! Our friends were pressed to lunch with us, to commend our independence and — to eat our biscuits. It was a French Revolution in miniature;

we danced the carmagnole in the kitchen and were prepared to conquer the Samoan social world. One morning, before the ardour and zest of it all had time to be dulled by custom, I happened to discover a young and very handsome Samoan on our back verandah. He was a dandified youngster, with a red flower behind his ear and his hair limed in the latest fashion. I liked his open face and his unembarrassed manner, and inquired what propitious fate had brought him to sit upon our ice-chest and radiate good nature on our back porch. It seemed that Simele, the overseer, owed him two Chile dollars, and that he was here, bland, friendly, but insistent, to collect the debt in person. That Simele would not be back for hours in no way disturbed him, and he seemed prepared to swing his brown legs and show his white teeth for a whole eternity.

'Chief,' I said, a sudden thought striking me, 'you are he that I have been

looking for so long. You are going to stay in Vailima and be our cook!'

'But I don't know how to cook,' he replied.

'That is no matter,' I said. 'Two months ago I was as you; to-day I am a splendid cook. I will teach you my skill.'

'But I don't want to learn,' he said, and brought back the conversation to Chile dollars.

'There is no good making excuses,' I said. 'This is a psychological moment in the history of Vailima. You are the Man of Destiny.'

'But I haven't my box,' he expostulated.

'I will send for it,' I returned. 'I would not lose you for twenty boxes. If you need clothes, why there stands my own chest; flowers grow in profusion and the oil-bottle rests never empty beside my humble bed; and in the hot hours

of the afternoon there is the beautifullest pool where you can bathe and wash your lovely hair. Moreover, so generous are the regulations of Tusitala's government that his children receive weekly large sums of money, and they are allowed on Sundays to call their friends to this elegant house and entertain them with salt beef and biscuit.'

Thus was Taalolo introduced into the Vailima kitchen, never to leave it for four years save when the war-drum called him to the front with a six-shooter and a 'death-tooth'—the Samoan cutlass or head-knife. He became in time not only an admirable *chef*, but the nucleus of the whole native establishment and the loyalest of all our Samoan family. His coming was the turning-point in the history of the house; we had achieved independence of our white masters, and their discontented white faces had disappeared one by one. Honest brown ones now took

their places, and we gained more than good servants by the change.

Samoans live in a loose, patriarchal fashion. With them, as with most barbarians, the family is everything, and the immediate head of it the unit of the country. Moreover, the easy system of adoption that prevails throughout, and the bounty of Nature that makes food-getting more of a pastime than a labour, allows the Samoan to pass from one family to another almost at will. There is a single word in the dictionary that contains a world of meaning—a man that works hard for a short time and then grows lazy —'as applied to a stranger entering a new family.'

Naturally it came to pass in Vailima that a new family was started, with Mr. Stevenson for its house-chief, and the tradition of devotion and service transferred bodily from Samoan life into our own. None knew better than Mr. Steven-

son how to foster and encourage this innovation, and our family soon began to acquire a status in the land. The Stuart tartan kilt, our uniform on Sundays and other holidays, became a thing of pride to the wearer and the badge of his high connection, and the *mamalu* or prestige of Vailima was to be supported and upheld by every son of the house. Truth suffered occasionally at the hands of the more zealous, and I can trace many misstatements and exaggerations that have crept into print to the misguided though laudable ardour of our clansmen. A friend aptly described Vailima as 'an Irish castle of 1820 minus the dirt.' It must be remembered that the better class of Samoans are gentlefolk, and are undistinguishable, so far as good manners, good breeding and tact are concerned, from the people we ordinarily mix with in our own country. No Spaniard is more punctilious in matters of etiquette, no German prouder

of his long pedigree, than these handsome and stalwart barbarians; and their language is even enriched by a whole vocabulary of courtesy with which every chief must be familiar. In fact, the rudeness, boorishness, and pretentiousness of many whites is often sharply criticised and condemned.

In number the Vailima family varied from thirteen to twenty-one, a picked lot of young men that for physique, good manners, obedience, and manliness it would be hard to match in any country. It must be said that Mr. Stevenson's methods of discipline had much to do with this favourable result. Unquestioning and absolute obedience was insisted upon; an order once given was seldom altered or modified, and the singular and unforeseen partiality of Samoans (apparently the most casual of mankind) for system, for an ordered and regulated existence, for a harness of daily routine, was taken advantage of to the fullest degree. Every man had his work

outlined for him in advance, and several even possessed type-written lists of their various duties. Little proclamations and notices were often posted up in order to correct petty irregularities, and to define the responsibility and authority of each member of the household. For breaches of discipline, untruthfulness, absence without leave, etc., money fines were imposed with rigorous impartiality, and for more serious offences a regular court martial was held. No one was ever fined without his first assenting to the justice of the punishment, and the culprit was always given the option of receiving his money in full and being dismissed the place. A leaf, too, was taken with advantage from the old Naval Regulations, and no man was ever punished the same day of the offence. The fines themselves went into the coffers of the rival missionary societies, Protestant or Roman Catholic, according to the creed of the involuntary donor. A lecture often

fell to the lot of the wrong-doer that he relished even less than the penalty of his offence, and the summing up of an important *suenga* or trial was always listened to in breathless silence by the members of the household. It ran usually to something of this sort:

'Fiaali'i, you have confessed that you stole the cooked pigs, the taro, the palusamis, the breadfruit, and fish that fell to Vailima's portion at yesterday's feast. Your wish to eat was greater than your wish to be a gentleman. You have shown a bad heart and your sin is a great one, not alone for the pigs which count as naught, but because you have been false to your family. Even a German blackboy that knows not God and whom you despise, would not have done what you have done. It is easy to say that you are sorry, that you wish you were dead: but that is no answer. We have lost far more than a few dozen baskets of food; we

have lost our trust in you, which used to be so great, our confidence in your loyalty and high-chiefness. See how many bad things have resulted from your sin! First, you have told many lies and have tried to screen your wickedness by a trick, saying that five baskets was all the feast apportioned to us, thus bringing shame on the gentleman who gave it. Secondly, you persuaded Ti'a, Tulafono, and Satupaiala to join in your conspiracy, which they did not wish to do at first, they being like Eve in the garden and you the Serpent. You have hurt all our hearts here, not because of the pigs, but because we are ashamed and mortified before the world. If this thing gets spoken of and carried from house to house, we shall be ashamed to walk along the road, for people will mock at us, and the name of Vailima will not be fragrant. Then if it reaches the ears of the great chiefs that treated us so handsomely, are we to say: "Be not angry,

gentlemen, four of our family are thieves; their respect and love for me is great, but their wish to eat pig is greater still!" There are great sins that are easily forgiven: there are others that are hard to pardon. It is better to obey a strong and angry heart than to obey the belly. *I* am not your father; *I* am not your chief. The belly is *your* chief! But God has not given all my family bad hearts. Look at Leupolu. He was not like Ti'a, Tulafono, and Satupaiala; he was a brave man, though he was only one and you so many. He said you were doing a wicked thing; he would not surrender his burden of food, nor did the fear of ghosts prevent him coming home in the dark. For if a man is brave in uprightness he is brave in all other ways. But Leupolu loved his family more than his belly, and when he came home he did not make a great cry, nor did he tell the story of your wickedness. He went about with a sad face and said

nothing, for he was like myself, angry but sorrowful. He will be rewarded for his love with a new kilt and suitable jacket. Ti'a, Tulafono, and Satupaiala are each fined two dollars. Fiaali'i, you are fined thirty dollars to be paid in weekly instalments. When the whole thirty-six dollars is ready it will be handed you, and you will make us a great feast here in Vailima by way of atonement, and for every pig stolen there shall be two pigs, and for every taro, two taro, and so on and more also. You shall be the host, but you shall call none of your friends to the feast, nor Ti'a, Tulafono, nor Satupaiala, but the others shall invite *their* friends. Then you will be forgiven and this thing forgotten. We live only by the high-chief-will of God, nor must we be cruel to one another when the High-Chief-Son of God is so good to us all. One word must still be said. Let the story of this wicked business be buried in your hearts, lest strangers talk of it. Fiaali'i

and the others have been tried and punished, and their penalties must not be increased by mockery or reproaches. Think of your own sins and hold your peace. This trial is finished. Sosimo, Mitaele, and Pulu will make *'ava* for us all, and it will be called on the front verandah.'

But Mr. Stevenson was not only the judge in the household, the meter out of punishments and rewards; he was the real *matai* or head of the family, and was always ready, no matter how busy he might be, or how much immersed in literary work, to turn a friendly ear to the plaints of his people. He was consulted on every imaginable subject, and all manner of petty persecutions and petty injustices were put right by his strong arm. Government chiefs and rebels consulted him with regard to policy; political letters were brought to him to read and criticise; his native following was so widely divided in party that he was often kept better

informed on current events than any one person in the country. Old gentlemen would arrive in stately procession with squealing pigs for the 'chief-house of wisdom,' and would beg advice on the capitation-tax or some such subject of the hour; an armed party would come from across the island with gifts, and a request that Tusitala would take charge of the funds of the village and in time buy the roof-iron for a proposed church. Parties would come to hear the latest news of the proposed disarming of the country, or to arrange a private audience with one of the officials; and poor, war-worn chieftains, whose only anxiety was to join the winning side, and who wished to consult with Tusitala as to which that might be. Mr. Stevenson would sigh sometimes as he saw these stately folk crossing the lawn in single file, their attendants following behind with presents and baskets, but he never failed to meet or hear them.

It has often been asked what gave Mr. Stevenson his standing in Samoa; what it was that made this English man of letters such a power in the land of his adoption. It must be remembered that to the Samoan mind he was inordinately rich, and many of them believe in the bottom of their hearts that the story of the bottle-imp was no fiction, but a tangible fact. Mr. Stevenson was a resident, a considerable land-owner, a man like themselves, with taro-swamps, banana plantations, and a Samoan *ainga* or family. He was no official with a hired house, here to-day with specious goodwill on his lips, and empty promises, but off to-morrow in the mail-steamer to that vague region called 'papalagi' or 'the white country.' He knew Samoan etiquette, and was familiar with the baser as well as the better side of the native character; he was cautiously generous after the fashion of the country, and neither excited covetousness by undue

prodigality nor failed to respond in a befitting way for favours received. Moreover, he was a consistent partisan of Mataafa, the ill-fated rebel king, a man of high and noble character, who though beaten and crushed by the government forces was nevertheless looked up to and covertly admired by all Samoa. The divinity that doth hedge a king, even a defeated and fallen one, cast a glamour over his close friend, Mr. Stevenson. And when the British man-of-war brought the unfortunate ex-king to Apia with many of his chiefs, it was Mr. Stevenson that first boarded the ship with sympathy and assistance; it was Mr. Stevenson that lighted the great ovens and brought down his men weighted with food-baskets when all were afraid and stood aloof; it was Mr. Stevenson that attended to the political prisoners in the noisome jail after they had been flogged through the streets and foully mishandled under the very guns of the men-of-

war; it was Mr. Stevenson that brought and paid the doctor, that had the stinking prison cleansed, that fed the starving wretches from his own pocket until the officials were ashamed and terrified into action. These things made a deep impression at the time, and will never be altogether forgotten. No wonder the government chiefs said to one another: 'Behold, this is indeed a friend; would our white officials have done the same had the day gone against us?' And the expression, 'Once Tusitala's friend, always Tusitala's friend,' went about the countryside like a proverb.

Mr. Stevenson's relations with the missionary bodies, the two Protestant and the Roman Catholic, were particularly happy. He stood high in the esteem of all three, for though a candid critic, he was in keen sympathy with their work and their way of doing it, and was ever outspoken in his admiration of their high-mindedness,

unsectarianism, and honest endeavour to improve the people. His friendship and regard was no less generously returned; and they opened their hearts to him, freely and frankly, on many a delicate matter undivulged to the general world; for together they stood on the common ground of regard for Samoa and devotion to its welfare. Would that I could say the same of our officials, or characterise Mr. Stevenson's relations with the most of them in the same strain; but it must be confessed that to them he was the *bête noir* of the country, or a better simile, the Samoan Jove, whose thunderbolts carried consternation far and wide. In vain they attempted to deport him from the island, to close his mouth by regulation, to post spies about his house and involve him in the illicit importation of arms and fixed ammunition. The natives looked on in wonder, and when the officials vanished and the undaunted Tusitala remained

behind, they drew their own conclusions.

But of the many causes that went to make Mr. Stevenson a considerable figure in his adopted country, his own personality after all was the chiefest. If his ardent, sympathetic individuality shines so convincingly through the text of his books that it makes friends of those who but dimly understand his work, how much more was it the case in far Samoa, where no printed page intervened between the man and his fellows, where his voice reached first hand and swayed—not literary coteries in the heart of civilisation, but war-scarred chiefs with guns in their hands and wrongs to right. He would have been loved and followed anywhere, but how much more in poor, misgoverned, distracted Samoa, so remote, so inarticulate; for he was one of the Great-hearts of this world both in pen and deed, and many were those he helped.

The current of life ran very placidly in Vailima, in spite of the little agitations and bitternesses of the tiny world at our feet. The conch-shell awakened the household at daybreak, and the routine of existence went forward unchanged, for all that the cannon might boom from the men-of-war, and the mellow trumpets proclaim the march of armed men. At times a war-party would halt at our front verandah, discuss a bowl of *ava* with the head of the house, and melt picturesquely away again in the forest, with perhaps a *feu de joie* in honour of their host—a compliment that he would gladly have dispensed with. Meals were served in the great hall of Vailima, a noble room over fifty feet long and proportionately broad, of which Mr. Stevenson was pardonably proud. At half past two the clapping of hands announced that *ava* was prepared—that peculiar beverage of the South Pacific—and when every one was assembled it was called and

distributed in the Samoan manner, Mr. Stevenson receiving the first cup according to the dictates of etiquette. There were usually visitors in the house, and the cool of the noon often brought callers from the 'beach,' officers from the men-of-war, missionaries, officials, blue-jackets, local residents, priests, Mormon elders, passing tourists—all the flotsam and jetsam, in fact, of a petty port lying on one of the great thoroughfares of the world. It is hard for an outsider to realise the life and animation there is in Samoa. The American conjures up a picture of a frontier post; the Englishman harks to Kipling and station life in India; and both are wrong. Samoa is very cosmopolitan for all its insignificance on the map and its white population of four hundred souls: balls, picnics, parties, are of common occurrence; there is a constant flow of news, rumour, and island gossip; and four steamers a month link the group to the

outside world and bring an endless procession of strange faces across our little stage.

Mr. Stevenson was fond of amusement and hospitality, and apart from a constant succession of more formal luncheon-parties and dinners, there was always room at his table for the unexpected guests that the *chef* had orders to bear in mind. The first cotillon ever given in Samoa took place at Vailima; the first pony paper-chase was got up under Mr. Stevenson's direction; he was always eager to bear his part in any scheme for the public entertainment, and his support and subscription could always be reckoned on in advance. Nor was he less backward with regard to the natives, whom he often feasted in the Samoan way with great pomp and a rigorous regard to etiquette and custom. His birthday party was a veritable gathering of the clans, beginning at dawn and continuing uninterruptedly till dusk, with a huge feast and

troops of dancers to entertain the people. A Christmas-tree rejoiced the household every year, and was the occasion of breathless anticipation and excitement; and the little fiesta was not unenhanced by the good-humoured raillery with which the presents were distributed.

Mr. Stevenson could not be seen to better advantage than at the head of his faultless table, sharing and leading the conversation of the guests that various strange fates had brought together beneath his roof. He loved the contrast of evening dress and the half-naked attendants; the rough track that led the visitor through forest and jungle to this glowing house under Vaea, the juxtaposition of original Hogarths, Piranes's, pictures by Sargent, Lemon and Will H. Low; the sculptured work of Rodin and Augustus St. Gaudens, with rifle-racks, revolvers, and trophies of savage weapons. And the conversation that was to match: English literature and

copra; Paul Bourget's new book and the rebel loss at Tifitifi; European politics and the best method of suppressing head-taking!

When he was detained in town at night, or by some mischance was late of returning to Vailima, it was his command that the house should be lit throughout so that he might see it shining through the forest on his home-coming. As I must now be drawing to an end, where better could I stop than at this picture—the tired man drawing rein in 'The Road of the Loving Heart,' and gazing up at the lights of home?

# POLA

## POLA

'If you want a child as badly as all that,' my brother said, 'why not adopt a chief's son, some one who is handsome and well-born, and will be a credit to you, instead of crying your eyes out over a little common brat who is an ungrateful cub, and ugly into the bargain?'

I wasn't particularly fond of the 'common brat,' but I had grown used to tending him, bandaging his miserable little foot, and trying to make his lot easier to bear, and he had been spirited away. One may live long in Samoa without understanding the whys and wherefores. His mother may have been jealous of my care of the child and carried him away in the night;

or the clan to which he belonged may have sent for him, though his reputed father was our assistant cook. At any rate, he had gone—disappeared as completely and entirely as though he had vanished into thin air, and I, sitting on the steps of the verandah, gave way to tears.

Two days later, hastening across the courtyard, I turned the corner suddenly, nearly falling over a small Samoan boy, who stood erect in a gallant pose before the house, leaning upon a long stick of sugar-cane, as though it were a spear.

'Who are you?' I asked, in the native language.

'I am your son,' was the surprising reply.

'And what is your name?'

'Pola,' he said. 'Pola, of Tanugamanono, and my mother is the white chief lady, Teuila of Vailima.'

He was a beautiful creature, of an even

tint of light bronze brown; his slender body reflected the polish of scented cocoa-nut oil, the tiny garment he called his *lava lava*, fastened at the waist, was coquettishly kilted above one knee. He wore a necklace of scarlet berries across his shoulders, and a bright red hibiscus flower stuck behind his ear. On his cheek a single rose-leaf hid the dimple. His large black eyes looked up at me with an expression of terror, overcome by pure physical courage. From the top of his curly head to the soles of his high-arched, slender foot he looked *tama'alii* — high-bred. To all my inquiries he answered in purest high-chief Samoan that he was my son.

My brother came to the rescue with explanations. Taking pity on me, he had gone to our village (as we called Tanuga-manono) and adopted the chief's second son in my name, and here he was come to present himself in person.

I shook hands with him, a ceremony he performed very gracefully with great dignity. Then he offered me the six feet of sugar-cane, with the remark that it was a small, trifling gift, unworthy of my high-chief notice. I accepted it with a show of great joy and appreciation, though by a turn of the head one could see acres of sugar-cane growing on the other side of the river.

There was an element of embarrassment in the possession of this charming creature. I could not speak the Samoan language very well at that time, and saw, by his vague but polite smile, that much of my conversation was incomprehensible to him. His language to me was so extremely 'high-chief' that I could not understand more than three words in a sentence. What made the situation still more poignant was that look of repressed fear glinting in the depths of his velvety eyes.

I took him by the hand (that trembled slightly in mine, though he walked boldly along with me), and led him about the house, thinking the sight of all the wonders of Vailima might divert his mind. When I threw open the door of the hall, with its pictures and statues, waxed floor and glitter of silver on the sideboard, Pola made the regulation quotation from Scripture, 'And behold the half has not been told me.'

He went quite close to the tiger-skin, with the glass eyes and big teeth. 'It is not living?' he asked, and when I assured him it was dead he remarked that it was a large pussy, and then added, gravely, that he supposed the forests of London were filled with these animals.

He held my hand quite tightly going up the stairs, and I realised then that he could never have mounted a staircase before. Indeed, everything in the house, even chairs and tables, books and pictures,

were new and strange to this little savage gentleman.

I took him to my room, where I had a number of letters to write. He sat on the floor at my feet very obediently while I went on with my work. Looking down a few minutes later I saw that he had fallen asleep, lying on a white rug in a childish, graceful attitude, and I realised again his wild beauty and charm.

Late in the day, as it began to grow dark, I asked Pola if he did not wish to go home.

'No, Teuila,' he answered bravely.

'But you will be my boy just the same,' I explained. 'Only you see Tumau (his real mother) will be lonely at first. So you can sleep at the village and come and see me during the day.'

His eyes lit up with that and the first smile of the day overspread his face, showing the whitest teeth imaginable.

It was not long before he was perfectly

at home in Vailima. He would arrive in the morning early, attended by a serving-man of his family who walked meekly in the young chief's footsteps, carrying the usual gift for me. Sometimes it was sugar-cane, or a wreath woven by the village girls, or a single fish wrapped in a piece of banana-leaf, or a few fresh water prawns, or even a bunch of way-side flowers; my little son seldom came empty-handed.

It was Pola who really taught me the Samoan language. Ordinarily the natives cannot simplify their remarks for foreigners, but Pola invented a sort of Samoan baby-talk for me; sometimes, if I could not understand, he would shake me with his fierce little brown hands, crying 'Stupid, stupid!' But generally he was extremely patient, trying a sentence in half a dozen different ways, with his bright eyes fixed eagerly on my face; when the sense of what he said dawned upon me and I

repeated it to prove that I understood, his own countenance would light up with an expression of absolute pride and triumph. 'Good!' he would say approvingly. 'Great is your high-chief wisdom!'

Once we spent a happy afternoon together in the forest, picking up queer land shells, bright berries and curious flowers, while Pola dug up a number of plants by the roots. I asked him the next day what he had done with the beautiful red flowers. His reply was beyond me, so I shook my head. He looked at me anxiously for a moment with the worried expression that so often crossed his face in conversation with me, and patting the floor scraped up an imaginary hole. 'They sit down in the dusty,' he said in baby Samoan. 'Where?' I asked. 'In front of Tumau.' And then I understood that he had planted them in the ground before his mother's house.

Another time he came up all laughter and excitement to tell of an adventure.

'Your brother,' he said, 'the high-chief Loia, he of the four eyes (eye-glasses), came riding by the village as I was walking up to Vailima. He offered me a ride on his horse and gave me his chief-hand. I put my foot on the stirrup, and just as I jumped the horse shied, and, as I had hold of the high-chief Loia, we both fell off into the road *palasi*.'

'Yes,' I said, 'you both fell off. That was very funny.'

'*Palasi!*' he reiterated.

But here I looked doubtful. Pola repeated his word several times as though the very sound ought to convey some idea to my bemuddled brain, and then a bright idea struck him. I heard his bare feet pattering swiftly down the stairs. He came flying back, still laughing, and laid the dictionary in my lap. I hastily turned the leaves, Pola questing in each one like

an excited little dog, till I found the definition of his word, 'to fall squash like a ripe fruit on the ground.'

'*Palasi!*' he cried triumphantly, when he saw I understood, making a gesture downward with both hands the while laughing heartily. 'We both fell off *palasi!*'

It was through Pola that I learned all the news of Tanugamanono. He would curl up on the floor at my feet as I sat in my room sewing, and pour forth an endless stream of village gossip. How Mata, the native parson, had whipped his daughter for going to a picnic on Sunday and drinking a glass of beer.

'Her father went whack! whack!' Pola illustrated the scene with gusto, 'and Maua cried, ah! ah! But the village says Mata is right, for we must not let the white man's evil come near us.'

'Evil?' I said; 'what evil?'

'Drink,' said Pola solemnly.

Then he told how 'the ladies of Tanugamanono' bought a pig of a trader, each contributing a dollar until forty dollars were collected. There was to be a grand feast among the ladies on account of the choosing of a maid or *taupo*, the young girl who represents the village on all state occasions. When the pig came it turned out to be an old boar, so tough and rank it could not be eaten. The ladies were much ashamed before their guests, and asked the white man for another pig, but he only laughed at them. He had their money, so he did not care.

'That was very, very bad of him,' I exclaimed indignantly.

'It is the way of white people,' said Pola philosophically.

It was through my little chief that we learned of a bit of fine hospitality. It seems that pigs were scarce in the village, so each house-chief pledged himself to refrain from killing one of them for six

months. Any one breaking this rule agreed to give over his house to be looted by the village.

Pola came up rather late one morning, and told me, hilariously, of the fun they had had looting Tupuola's house.

'But Tupuola is a friend of ours,' I said. 'I don't like to hear of all his belongings being scattered.'

'It is all right,' Pola exclaimed. 'Tupuola said to the village, "Come and loot. I have broken the law, and I will pay the forfeit."'

'How did he break the law?' I asked.

'When the high-chief Loia, your brother of the four eyes, stopped the night at Tanugamanono, on his way to the shark fishing, he stayed with Tupuola, so of course it was chiefly to kill a pig in his honour.'

'But it was against the law. My brother would not have liked it, and Tupuola must

have felt badly to know his house was to be looted.'

'He would have felt worse,' said Pola, 'to have acted unchiefly to a friend.'

We never would have known of the famine in Tanugamanono if it had not been for Pola. The hurricane had blown off all the young nuts from the cocoanut-palms and the fruit from the breadfruit-trees, while the taro was not yet ripe. We passed the village daily. The chief was my brother's dear friend, the girls often came up to decorate the place for a dinner-party, but we had no hint of any distress in the village.

One morning I gave Pola two large ship's biscuits from the pantry.

'Be not angry,' said Pola. 'But I prefer to carry these home.'

'Eat them,' I said, 'and I will give you more.'

Before leaving that night he came to remind me of this. I was swinging in a

hammock reading a novel when Pola came to kiss my hand and bid me good-night.

'*Love*,' I said, '*Talofa*.'

'*Soifua*,' Pola replied, 'may you sleep'; and then he added, 'Be not angry, but the ship's biscuits——'

'Are you hungry?' I asked. 'Didn't you have your dinner?'

'Oh, yes, plenty of pea-soupo' (a general name for anything in tins); 'but you said, in your high-chief kindness, that if I ate the two biscuits you would give me more to take home.'

'And you ate them?'

He hesitated a perceptible moment, and then said:

'Yes, I ate them.'

He looked so glowing and sweet, leaning forward to beg a favour, that I suddenly pulled him to me by his bare, brown shoulders for a kiss. He fell against the hammock and two ship's biscuits slipped from under his *lava lava*.

'O Pola!' I cried reproachfully. It cut me to the heart that he should lie to me.

He picked them up in silence, repressing the tears that stood in his eyes, and turned to go. I felt there was something strange in this.

'I will give you two more biscuits,' I said quietly, 'if you will explain why you told a wicked lie and pained the heart that loved you.'

'Teuila,' he cried anxiously, 'I love you. I would not pain your heart for all the world. But they are starving in the village. My father, the chief, divides the food, so that each child and old person and all shall share alike, and to-day there was only green baked bananas, two for each, and to-night when I return there will be again a division of one for each member of the village. It seems hard that I should come here and eat and eat, and my brother and my two little sisters,

and the good Tumau also, should have only one banana. So I thought I would say to you, "behold I have eaten the two biscuits," and then you would give me two more and that would be enough for one each to my two sisters and Tumau and my brother, who is older than I.'

That night my brother went down to the village and interviewed the chief. It was all true, as Pola had said, only they had been too proud to mention it. Mr. Stevenson sent bags of rice and kegs of beef to the village, and gave them permission to dig for edible roots in our forest, so they were able to tide over until the *taro* and yams were ripe.

Pola always spoke of Vailima as 'our place,' and Mr. Stevenson as 'my chief.' I had given him a pony that exactly matched his own skin. A missionary, meeting him in the forest road as he was galloping along like a young centaur, asked, 'Who are you?"

'I,' answered Pola, reining in with a gallant air, 'am one of the Vailima men!'

He proved, however, that he considered himself a true Samoan by a conversation we had together once when we were walking down to Apia. We passed a new house where a number of half-caste carpenters were briskly at work.

'See how clever these men are, Pola,' I said, 'building the white man's house. When you get older perhaps I will have you taught carpentering, that you may build houses and make money.'

'Me?' asked Pola, surprised.

'Yes,' I replied. 'Don't you think that would be a good idea?'

'I am the son of a chief,' said Pola.

'I know,' I said, 'that your highness is a very great personage, but all the same it is good to know how to make money. Wouldn't you like to be a carpenter?'

'No,' said Pola scornfully, adding, with a wave of his arm that took in acres of

breadfruit-trees, banana groves, and taro patches, 'Why should I work? All this land belongs to me.'

Once, when Pola had been particularly adorable, I told him, in a burst of affection, that he could have anything in the world he wanted, only begging him to name it.

He smiled, looked thoughtful for an instant, and then answered, promptly, that of all things in the world he would like ear-rings, like those the sailors wear.

I bought him a pair the next time I went to town. Then, armed with a cork and a needleful of white silk, I called Pola, and asked if he wanted the ear-rings badly enough to endure the necessary operation.

He smiled and walked up to me.

'Now, this is going to hurt, Pola,' I said.

He stood perfectly straight when I pushed the needle through his ear and cut off the little piece of silk. I looked anxiously in his face as he turned his head

for me to pierce the other one. I was so nervous that my hands trembled.

'Are you *sure* it does not hurt, Pola, my pigeon?' I asked, and I have never forgotten his answer.

'My father is a soldier,' he said.

Pola's dress was a simple garment, a square of white muslin hemmed by his adopted mother. Like all Samoans, he was naturally very clean, going with the rest of the 'Vailima men' to swim in the pool twice a day. He would wash his hair in the juice of wild oranges, clean his teeth with the inside husk of the cocoa-nut, and putting on a fresh *lava lava* would wash out the discarded one in the river, laying it out in the sunshine to dry. He was always decorated with flowers in some way—a necklace of jessamine buds, pointed red peppers, or the scarlet fruit of the pandanas. Little white boys look naked without their clothes, but Pola in a strip of muslin, with his wreath of flowers,

or sea-shells, some ferns twisted about one ankle, perhaps, or a boar's tusk fastened to his left arm with strands of horse-hair, looked completely, even handsomely, dressed.

He was not too proud to lend a helping hand at any work going—setting the table, polishing the floor of the hall or the brass handles of the old cabinet, leading the horses to water, carrying pails for the milkmen, helping the cook in the kitchen, the butler in the pantry, or the cow-boy in the fields; holding skeins of wool for Mr. Stevenson's mother, or trotting beside the lady of the house, 'Aolele,' as they all called her, carrying seeds or plants for her garden. When my brother went out with a number of natives laden with surveying implements, Pola only stopped long enough to beg for a cane-knife before he was leading the party. If Mr. Stevenson called for his horse and started to town it was always Pola who flew to open the

gate for him waving a *Manuia* and 'good luck to the travelling!'

The Samoans are not reserved, like the Indians, or haughty, like the Arabs. They are a cheerful, lively people, who keenly enjoy a joke, laughing at the slighest provocation. Pola bubbled over with fun, and his voice could be heard chattering and singing gaily at any hour of the day. He made up little verses about me, which he sang to the graceful gestures of the *siva* or native dance, showing unaffected delight when commended. He cried out with joy and admiration when he first heard a hand-organ, and was excitedly happy when allowed to turn the handle. I gave him a box of tin soldiers, which he played with for hours in my room. He would arrange them on the floor, talking earnestly to himself in Samoan.

'These are brave brown men,' he would mutter. 'They are fighting for Mataafa. Boom! boom! These are white men. They

are fighting the Samoans. Pouf!' And with a wave of his arm he knocked down a whole battalion, with the scornful remark, 'The Samoans win!'

After Mr. Stevenson's death so many of his Samoan friends begged for his photograph that we sent to Sydney for a supply, which was soon exhausted. One afternoon Pola came in and remarked, in a very hurt and aggrieved manner, that he had been neglected in the way of photographs.

'But your father, the chief, has a large fine one.'

'True,' said Pola. 'But that is not mine. I have the box presented to me by your high-chief goodness. It has a little cover, and there I wish to put the sun-shadow of Tusitala, the beloved chief whom we all revere, but I more than the others, because he was the head of my clan.'

'To be sure,' I said, and looked about for a photograph. I found a picture cut

from a weekly paper, one I remember that Mr. Stevenson himself had particularly disliked. He would have been pleased had he seen the scornful way Pola threw the picture on the floor.

'I will not have that!' he cried. 'It is pig-faced. It is not the shadow of our chief.' He leaned against the door and wept.

'I have nothing else, Pola,' I protested. 'Truly, if I had another picture of Tusitala I would give it to you.'

He brightened up at once. 'There is the one in the smoking-room,' he said, 'where he walks back and forth. That pleases me, for it looks like him.' He referred to an oil painting of Mr. Stevenson by Sargent. I explained that I could not give him that. 'Then I will take the round one,' he said, 'of tin.' This last was the bronze *bas-relief* by St. Gaudens. I must have laughed involuntarily, for he went out deeply hurt. Hearing a strange

noise in the hall an hour or so later, I opened the door, and discovered Pola lying on his face, weeping bitterly.

'What are you crying about?' I asked.

'The shadow, the shadow,' he sobbed. 'I want the sun-shadow of Tusitala.'

I knocked at my mother's door across the hall, and at the sight of that tear-stained face her heart melted, and he was given a good photograph, which he wrapped in a banana-leaf, tying it carefully with a ribbon of grass.

We left Samoa after Mr. Stevenson's death, staying away for more than a year. Pola wrote me letters by every mail in a large round hand, but they were too conventional to bear any impress of his mind. He referred to our regretted separation, exhorting me to stand fast in the high-chief will of the Lord, and, with his love to each member of the family, mentioned by name and title, he prayed that I might

live long, sleep well, and not forget Pola, my unworthy servant.

When we returned to Samoa we were up at dawn, on shipboard, watching the horizon for the first faint cloud that floats above the island of Upulu. Already the familiar perfume came floating over the waters — that sweet blending of many odours, of cocoanut oil and baking bread-fruit, of jessamine and gardenia. It smelt of home to us, leaning over the rail and watching. First a cloud, then a shadow growing more and more distinct until we saw the outline of the island. Then, as we drew nearer, the deep purple of the distant hills, the green of the rich forests, and the silvery ribbons where the water-falls reflect the sunshine.

Among the fleet of boats skimming out to meet us was one far ahead of the others, a lone canoe propelled by a woman, with a single figure standing in the prow. As the steamer drew near I made out the

figure of Pola, dressed in wreaths and flowers in honour of my return. As the anchor went down in the bay of Apia and the custom-house officer started to board, I called out, begging him to let the child come on first. He drew aside. The canoe came alongside the ship, and Pola, in his finery of fresh flowers, ran up the gangway and stepped forth on the deck. The passengers drew back before the strange little figure, but he was too intent upon finding me to notice them.

'Teuila!' he cried joyfully, with the tears rolling down his cheeks. I went forward to meet him, and, kneeling on the deck, caught him in my arms.

# SAMOAN SONGS

## SAMOAN SONGS

In Samoa a man's standing in the community can be pretty well gauged by the songs that are composed and sung about him. Some are humorous, some satirical, some complimentary, and many are only rhymes to his name, like a nursery jingle. The smallest incident, once put into song, will live for years. There is a boat-song about a very unpopular official who left the islands years ago. We were once travelling by water in the smooth lagoon within the coral reef, and passed the house where this man had lived; it was pointed out to us, and instantly, with a sweep of the oars to keep time, the

boatman trolled out the jeering, scornful words:

> A wise man broke through the horizon:
> Did he give us of his wisdom?
> Nay; no wisdom came to us,
> But all our money went to him.
> Aue! Aue! All our money's gone!

Mr. Stevenson mentions in his *Footnote to History* how Mr. Weber of the German firm was remembered in the islands:

> His name still lives in the songs of Samoa. One that I have heard tells of Misi Ueba and a biscuit-box, the suggesting incident being long since forgotten. Another sings plaintively how all things, land and food and property, pass progressively, as by a law of nature, into the hands of Misi Ueba, and soon nothing will be left for Samoans. This is an epitaph the man would have enjoyed.

There are many songs about Tusitala ('Story-writer'), as Mr. Stevenson was called in the island—rousing boat-songs, when the paddles all beat time, and the

handles are clicked against the sides of the canoe to the rhythm of his name. The Samoans show their courtesy in remembering a man's songs, and even in rowing Mr. Stevenson out to meet a passenger-ship I have heard the boatmen keep time to

Tusitala ma Aolele.

Much travelling is done by water in the islands, and at night, to avoid the sun's rays. It was very pleasant rowing by moonlight in the quiet waters of the lagoon near the shore, within the protecting coral reef that surrounds each island of the group and breasts the full force of the ocean breakers. The roaring and boiling of the surf made a pleasant accompaniment to the singing voices of the brown men as they kept time to the rhythm of the song with a long sweep of the oars. The groves of palm-trees grow in thick foliage to the water's edge, and

often from the shadow where a cluster of native houses lay hidden, the people, recognising the passing traveller by his boat-song, would call out across the lagoon, 'Talofa Tusitala!'

There are dancing-songs about Mr. Stevenson, depicting life at Vailima, which might be called topical, as they generally touched upon the small incidents of plantation life. These were composed by some servant or labourer on the place, and saved up for a fête-day, such as Christmas, the holidays of England and America, and Mr. Stevenson's birthday, when they were chanted, danced, and acted with great spirit by the Samoans of our household. Sometimes every member of the family would be represented, each singing a characteristic verse, while all hands came in on the refrain in a full, rich harmony. The central figure, the heart of the song, was always Tusitala, and though they made many little jokes at the expense of the

rest of us, his name was always treated with respect.

Other songs are long chants, with innumerable verses descriptive of Tusitala's wisdom, his house, his friendship for the natives, and his love for Samoa. One of these may be called the 'Song of the Roof-Iron,' or 'The Meeting of Tusitala and the Men of Vaie'e.'

The chief of Vaie'e, on the windward side of the island, had saved up sixty dollars in twelve 'golden shillings,' as he called the five-dollar pieces. War had broken out, and he and his men were going off to fight. Their village might be looted during their absence, so they brought the bag of golden shillings to Tusitala; brought it with much ceremony and many presents, including a live turtle borne aloft on two poles. Mr. Stevenson locked up the precious bag in his safe that is built into the hall at Vailima. After three months, when the warriors returned,

the money was given back to them. They explained that it had been saved up with incredible patience to buy roof-iron for their new church. Mr. Stevenson good-naturedly took the matter in hand, with the result that the village received more roof-iron for the money than had ever been given to natives before. The friendly act was commemorated in a song that is really prettier than one would think the subject warranted, and the friendship begun over the matter of the roof-iron has endured between the people of Vaie'e and the members of Tusitala's family to this day.

'The Song of the Wen' commemorates an interesting event. A humble servant of the family, a lively, amusing fellow named Eliga, was afflicted with a large, unsightly tumour on his back. In a land where beauty is of the first importance, this unfortunate man was made to suffer doubly. Mr. Stevenson and my mother

had him examined by the kindly surgeon of an English man-of-war, who proposed an operation. But Eliga would not submit. He explained to Tusitala that there were strings in the wen that were tied about his heart, and if they were severed he would die. When Mr. Stevenson translated the doctor's diagnosis, Eliga was unconvinced. His skin, he said, was different on the outside from a white man's, and therefore it was not unnatural to suppose that his insides were made on a different plan.

In the end Mr. Stevenson's and my mother's arguments prevailed, and he submitted; but for their sakes, not his own, and he begged them to remember, when he was gone, that he had died for love of them. On the day of the operation Eliga prepared his house for death: the fine mats were spread, the rush curtains were all up, the decorations removed; the single room was so exquisitely prepared that not a

pebble on the floor was out of place, and his relatives were assembled. He himself was of a pale-lead colour and shaking with apprehension, yet he came out bravely and lifted Aolele off her horse, and received Tusitala and the doctor with perfect self-possession.

The operation was successful, and Eliga recovered; but it was not only renewed health and strength that came to him, but the fulfilment of his dearest ambitions. Owing to his deformity he had been kept out of titles and estates that were promptly restored to him. In the islands no deformed or very ugly person can be a chief. Indeed, if the children of a great man are ill-looking it is not unusual for him to adopt the handsomest boy in the village to succeed him.

The change in Eliga was magical. Instead of being the cringing, almost dwarfish creature who cut monkey-tricks to make people laugh, after the pathetic manner of

the deformed in Samoa, he carried himself erect, with a haughty mien; he dyed his hair red, and wore it in the latest fashion, combed up into Grecian curls and powdered with sandalwood. When he came into his title he made a visit to Vailima in state, accompanied by his new retainers, all laden with gifts for the family, and 'The Song of the Wen' was sung for the first time.

A semicircle of men sat upon mats laid out upon the lawn in front of the house. On the verandah, facing them, sat Mr. Stevenson, surrounded by his family and native servants, looking on with that serious, respectful attention it was his custom to accord all native formalities, however trivial they may have seemed.

Eliga came forward crouchingly, with a cocoanut tied by a piece of sinnet to his back. To the accompaniment of clapping hands and harmonious chanting, he half recited, half acted the story before us.

He capered, he made silly, hideous faces, he did the buffoon for the last time in his life; and then, as the string was cut, and the cocoanut rolled to the ground, he sprang erect, thumped his breast, and sang aloud his triumph and gratitude.

'O Tusitala!' he cried, 'when you first came here I was ugly and poor and deformed. I was jeered at and scorned by the unthinking. I ate grass; a bunch of leaves was my sole garment, and I had nothing to hide my ugliness. But now, O Tusitala, now I am beautiful; my body is sound and handsome: I bear a great name; I am rich and powerful and unashamed, and I owe it all to you, Tusitala. I have come to tell your Highness that I will not forget. Tusitala, I will work for you all my life, and my family shall work for your family, and there shall be no question of wage between us, only loving-kindness. My life is yours, and I will be your servant till I die.'

The most beautiful of the songs are those that were composed in memory of Mr. Stevenson, and sung at Vailima after his death. One, referring to the steadfast loyalty of Mr. Stevenson to the High Chief Mataafa, through peace and war, victory and defeat, has for its refrain:

Once Tusitala's friend,
Always Tusitala's friend.

Another describes a Samoan searching among the white people for one as good and kind as Tusitala. He asks of the officials and the consuls and captains of ships, and they all answer, 'There were none like him, and he has gone.'

For months after his death, parties of natives, headed by the chief bringing a present of a costly, fine mat, would come to Vailima and offer their condolences to the family. They were people whom he had befriended, with their followers and

clans: for each small, individual kindness an entire village assumed the burden of gratitude. There were his old friends, Tuimalealiifano and his village of Falelatai; Seumanutafa, the chief of Apia; the villages of Vaie'e and Safata, Falefā and many others. There were the political prisoners, chiefs of important clans, whom Mr. Stevenson was instrumental in releasing from jail. There were the members of the clan of the beloved Mataafa, then an exile, all bringing presents and making very touching speeches of love for Tusitala, and sympathy for his family. Each party, on leaving, handed to my mother a roll of paper: it was the song of that village written in memory of Mr. Stevenson.

When a party of Samoans, for love of him, weed the path that leads to Vaea; when they gather once a year, on the 13th of November, bringing wreaths and flowers to decorate his tomb; when a party of travellers cross the mountain by his grave,

they lift their tuneful voices in one of these songs :

Groan and weep, O my heart in its sorrow !
Alas for Tusitala, who rests in the forest !
Aimlessly we wait, and sorrowing ; will he again return ?
Lament, O Vailima ! Waiting and ever waiting !
Let us search and ask of the captains of ships,
'Be not angry, but has not Tusitala come ?'

Grieve, O my heart ! I cannot bear to look on
All the chiefs who are assembling.
Alas, Tusitala, thou art not here !
I look hither and thither, in vain, for thee.

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